

republicanherald.com

HOME NEWS SPORTS OPINION ARTS & LIVING CLASSIFIEDS CUSTOMER SERVICE SUBSCRIBE
 COPS AND COURTS | OBITUARIES | PAST 7 DAYS | EDUCATION | ELECTION 2010

Experts: Child welfare reports mixed in county

BY BEN WOLFGANG (STAFF WRITER BWOLFGANG@REPUBLICANHERALD.COM) Published: September 26, 2010

ARTICLE TOOLS

SHARE | FONT SIZE: [A] [A] [A]

OUR SOCIAL NETWORKS  

SHARE ON FACEBOOK

SIGN UP: NEWSLETTER

Local and state leaders are encouraged by a recent report on child welfare in Schuylkill County and across the state, but the number of child abuse cases and other figures are raising concerns.

The report, released earlier this week by the nonprofit youth advocacy group Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, shows the county making gains in a number of crucial areas.

Fewer children are re-entering foster care after reuniting with their families. Fewer children are bouncing between temporary homes and more are finding permanent family settings.

The total number of children in foster care in Schuylkill County dropped from 509 last year to 444 this year, according to the report.

"Like every other county, you've got work to do. But you're really on the right pathway," Joan Benso, executive director of the partnership, said in an interview last week.

The report showed that in 2009, about 16.5 percent of children in the county's Children & Youth services system eventually re-entered foster care after returning to their parents or legal guardians. That percentage has fallen this year to about 11 percent, while the state average remained steady at about 27 percent.

Last year, 37.9 percent of children in the system had three or more foster homes in a 23-month period, but that number fell this year to 22.1 percent.

The state figure rose from 33.3 percent in 2009 to about 36 percent this year, according to the report.

However, not all the news is good.

The number of substantiated child abuse cases has gone up this year. So far in 2010, 347 child abuse cases have been reported to Children & Youth and of those, 20.2 percent have been confirmed by county caseworkers.

Last year, 345 cases were reported and 16.2 percent were confirmed.

Children & Youth Director Lisa Stevens said the increase in substantiated cases is in part due to the work of her caseworkers and to the increased willingness of school employees, pediatricians and others who come in contact with children to report anything that could indicate abuse.

"If there's suspicion, it's our job to investigate," Stevens said in an interview last week. "We never leave a child in an unsafe situation."

While more confirmed child abuse cases is certainly not a good thing, Benso said there are positives that can be taken away from the figures.

"When we see substantiation rates going up in a county from a child protection standpoint, that's not a bad thing," she said. "It does mean that they're doing their due diligence. They're doing their homework. Unfortunately, they're finding more allegations that are founded."

Statewide, the number of reported child abuse cases and confirmed cases fell slightly from 2009 to this year.

The number of children who leave the system through emancipation - which means they turn 18 before finding a permanent home - has also gone up this year, rising from 8.2 percent in 2009 to 9.8 percent this year.

It's gone up slightly statewide during the same time, from 6.6 percent to 6.9 percent, according to the report.

Becoming an adult without having ever had a permanent, stable home can have grave consequences, Benso said.

"They're more likely to be homeless at some point in time. They're more likely to have unintended pregnancies. They're more likely to be in trouble with the law. They're less likely to complete their education," she said.

Stevens said Children & Youth has increased its focus on children approaching emancipation and said some children, even in their late teens, still want to be part of a family.

"We've had one youth who was adopted at 19," she said. "We've been setting up transitional meetings with kids before" they hit emancipation to address the problem and prepare soon-to-be adults, she said.

Infobox

Report highlights in Schuylkill County

Reported child abuse cases in 2009: 345

Reported cases in 2010: 347

If you died today,
 who would take care
 of your family?

**10-Yr Level Term
 Life Insurance
 \$500,000 Policy**
 (monthly premiums)

age	male
40	\$19.95
45	\$31.76
50	\$44.89
55	\$76.39

For A Free Quote

AccuQuote

Confirmed cases in 2009: 16.2 percent

Confirmed cases in 2010: 20.2 percent

Percentage of children in the system who leave at 18 without permanent home

2009: 8.2 percent

2010: 9.8 percent

Statewide in 2010: 6.9 percent

Foster care placement stability; children who three or more homes within two years

2009: 37.9 percent

2010: 22.1 percent

Statewide in 2010: 35.9 percent

Lake County News-Sun Ads by Yahoo!
 Local Experts. Professional Service 2383 N Delany Road Waukegan IL
 QuickLocal.com
Child Youth Care
 Looking For Child Youth Care? Resources For Child Youth Care.
 ResourcesFor.net
Child Youth Care Worker
 Looking For Child Youth Care Worker? Find Child Youth Care Worker Here.
 WebSuperSite.net

We welcome user discussion on our site, under the following guidelines:

To comment you must first create a profile and sign-in with a verified DISQUS account or social network ID. [Sign up here.](#)

Comments in violation of the rules will be denied, and repeat violators will be banned. **Please help police the community by flagging offensive comments for our moderators to review.** By posting a comment, you agree to our full terms and conditions. [Click here to read terms and conditions.](#)

Add New Comment

Required: Please login below to comment.

Type your comment here.

Post as ...

Showing 3 comments

Sort by **Popular now** [Subscribe by email](#) [Subscribe by RSS](#)

 **justice3** 1 day ago

I have dealt with Schuylkill County Children & Youth several years ago and what a bunch of liars these people are. Even the judge that was involved at the end of my dealings with these people agreed that they lied about a lot of things. I feel bad for the children and parents that have been lied to through this Children & Youth services dept.. They are one of the depts. that I hope the state and feds look very close at. Does anyone remember Luzern County?

4 people liked this. [Like](#) [Reply](#)

 **Underestimated_1** 1 day ago

Benso said, "Becoming an adult without having ever had a permanent, stable home can have grave consequences.They're more likely to be homeless at some point in time. They're more likely to have unintended pregnancies. They're more likely to be in trouble with the law. They're less likely to complete their education," she said.

100% the truth...I was born into domestic violence and sexual abuse. I went from this responsible single mother who had 18 people reporting to her who bought her own home without child support raising my child on my own without any help what so ever from anyone including my family to this person no one recognized not even myself when Chronic PTSD reared its ugly head after keeping the abuse a secret for over 30 yrs. Since then I have been in jail twice, homeless, suicidal thoughts, wacked out on drugs and alcohol self-medicating, etc. I wish someone would have called C&Y on my parents as I did walking into C&Y reporting abuse on my grandchildren a few months ago, so my report is in those stats. I will not stand back turning a blind eye to any kind of abuse on anyone no matter what the costs are and it's about time everyone else does the same.

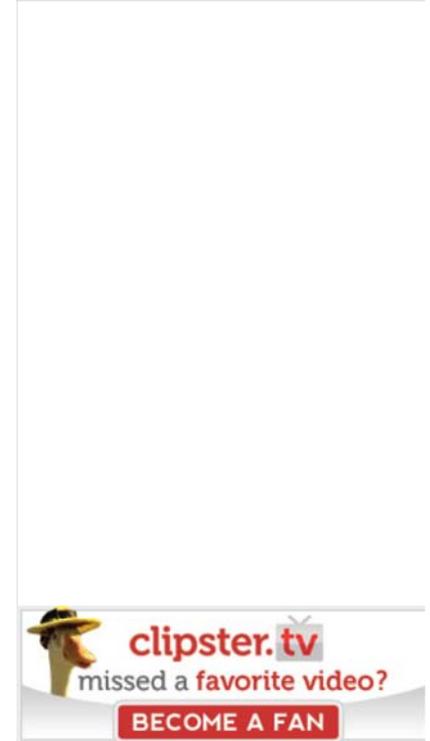
Showing events from: September 27. [Click for more.](#)



Storytime

Preschool-age kids (ages 3-5) and their caregivers are in for some fun with this hour

LATEST VIDEO




Call For Reform

A six-day series examining the need for reform of Pennsylvania's General Assembly



Marcellus Shale

Complete coverage of natural gas drilling in Northeast Pennsylvania.



Election 2010

Complete coverage of the 2010 election including audio and video

The Republican-Herald's 125th Anniversary

Read about our first 125 years.

[NEWS](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [OPINION](#) | [ARTS & LIVING](#) |
[CLASSIFIEDS](#) | [CUSTOMER SERVICE](#) | [SUBSCRIBE](#) |
[OBITUARIES](#) | [HOME DELIVERY](#) | [PLACE AN AD](#) | [JOBS](#)
News Services: [SEARCH ARCHIVES](#) | [NEWS ALERTS](#) |
[ADVERTISE](#) | [SITE MAP](#) | [HELP](#)

Copyright ©2010 Pottsville REPUBLICAN, Inc | 111 Mahantongo Street | Pottsville, PA 17901 | (570) 622-3456
[PRIVACY POLICY](#) | [OPINION POSTING POLICY](#) | [ABOUT OUR ADS](#) | Questions or comments? [CONTACT US](#)